

The nice young man and his bride who had come to our town were very hopeful that he would land a good job at the local mail order house. When he returned so quickly from his interview to their hotel, the bride was much worried. But she merely asked him, in a quiet voice, what had happened at the interview. He told her everything that had taken place.

Almost the first thing that the company officials wanted to know was how much money he could invest. When he told them of his small savings, they said that the amount would not be enough. So he said that he would like to think over the matter. On his way back to the hotel, he thought this way: If this big company was interested in his small change, they must be in pretty bad shape, and he would be better off if he got a job in some other place. So that is what he decided to do.

Jack – that is what his friends called him – did not seem pessimistic about the situation nor was he discouraged by his failure to land this particular job. If anything, he looked relieved that he had avoided the connection. He proposed that they eat and retire early so that he could get a good night's rest and be refreshed to start out in the morning. He was confident that he could find something to do very soon.

The next morning he was up bright and early and left the hotel just as the sun was casting its first rays on the river. He did not stop to order his breakfast, such was his hurry. This latter piece of information is important, because if Jack has paused for breakfast at the hotel dining room, his whole life might have been quite different.

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Well, you just never know what is going to happen next, and that was certainly the case for Jack and his new bride who had just arrived in our town. Before the sun was very high in the heavens, Jack had gone into the city to see if he could find a promising sort of work to do. While he was gone, the young wife was thinking what she might do. But even as she was giving the matter her thought, friend husband came back. Now what is wrong, she wondered. Evidently nothing, for he seemed very pleased with himself, and his face beamed with happiness. "We own a restaurant. I bought one this morning over on Wood Street."

This does not make sense, the gentle bride thought, although she was very careful not to say anything like that to Jack. First of all, he turns down a job about which he knows something, and the next day, he is in a business about which he knows nothing. And she surmised that their small savings had gone into the purchase of the shop. She was right. Jack assured her, however, that everything was all right.

He explained how the deal came about. While having breakfast in this little shop, Jack had told the owner that the coffee was the worst that he had ever tasted and that he could make better coffee himself.

The owner got angry and said that if he knew so much about coffee, he had better go out into the kitchen and make it himself. And

that he really wanted to sell the business. Jack said he would like to 304  
buy it. 306

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Let me tell you some of my experiences with ghosts in order 12  
that 14 I may qualify as an expert on the subject. I shall begin at the 29  
beginning and shall have to go back a good way, for I was but ten years 43  
of age when I met my first ghost. The experience made a deep 56  
impression on my mind, and even though it was a long time ago, I can 69  
recall all of the details. Even so slight a thing as the ticking of the 83  
tall clock in the corner of the room comes back to me now, and I 96  
can count those ticks just as I sat and counted them while listening 111  
intently for other sounds in the house. 117

The old house sat back some way from the main road and was 130  
only a story and a half in height. It was an old house and the living 144  
rooms were all on the first floor with an attic above which was reached 159  
by a short flight of steep stairs. I seldom went into the attic, mainly 173  
because it was much too big and lonely for a small boy of ten. It was 187  
not so bad in the daytime, for there was a window at each end; but at 201  
night it was a very different sort of place and I never went up there 214  
alone. 217

It was winter, and such a winter as you who live in big cities 231  
know nothing at all about. Over hill and dale as far as the eye could see, 245  
the snow lay five feet deep on the level ground. In many places, it was 259  
heaped and drifted into great piles almost as big as the house itself. 273  
There was nothing to break that vast covering of white except in those 287  
few sunny places the top of a stone wall or fence could be seen. 301  
Everywhere else, Nature had put the world to sleep, and it was a 315  
perfect time for my first meeting with a ghost. I will not forget it. 330

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